
Stem cell agencies for California and India sign agreement to fund collaborative research projects that can accelerate regenerative medicine toward therapies

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The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the state stem cell agency created by Proposition 71, and the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (inSTEM), an autonomous unit of the Department of Biotechnology of the Government of India, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines ways the two agencies can jointly fund collaborative research projects that bring together top stem cell scientists in California and top stem cell scientists in India.

The agreement was announced March 21 at a workshop in Bangalore at which researchers affiliated with CIRM and inSTEM shared ideas and discussed complementary strengths that could lead to future collaborative research projects. As the two agencies move forward they will keep each other informed of planned Requests for Applications and, when the grant round fits their mutual goals, they will invite scientists in India and California to form teams to file a single, fully integrated scientific project proposal. Proposals that pass review in both jurisdictions will have the California researchers funded by CIRM and the Indian researchers funded by inSTEM.

"India has robust stem cell research communities in both basic science and translational clinical science, which should create synergies with many projects in California and help us further leverage California's investment in the field for the good of patients everywhere," said Alan Trounson, president of CIRM.

inStem provides exceptional scientists with the opportunity to undertake ground-breaking research into the fundamental properties of stem cells (mammalian or model organisms) and their utility in creating disease models as well as their applications to drug discovery and the development of cell therapies. In addition to its intramural research program, a key aspect of inStem's mandate is to promote stem cell research in India, through courses, workshops and meetings, where researchers from all over India can exchange ideas with the international stem cell community.

For CIRM this agreement builds on the 10 other international Collaborative Funding Partner agreements the agency has developed—the MRC in the United Kingdom, the Cancer Stem Cell Consortium in Canada, the state of Victoria in Australia, the MICINN in Spain, JST in Japan, MOST in China, BMBF in Germany, the Andalusian Initiative for Advanced Therapies in the Spanish state of Andalusia, the French National Research Agency, and the National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia.

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. A list of grants and loans awarded to date may be seen here: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/for-researchers/researchfunding>

Media Contact:

Don Gibbons

415-396-9117

dgibbons@cirm.ca.gov

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